

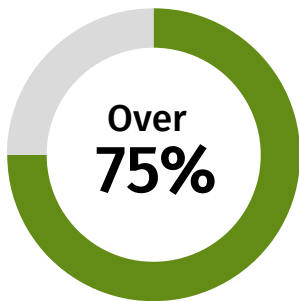


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# Breaking the compromise: Why healthcare AI shouldn't be an 'either-or' decision



Revolutionary strides in healthcare AI tools mean professionals may no longer need to fear trading trust, privacy, and integrity of clinical answers for workflow efficiency and speed.



*of respondents say their organizations now use AI in at least one business function*

Artificial or augmented intelligence (AI) has, in less than a decade, exploded from being the province of experimentation among technology innovators to an everyday must-have for professionals in all sorts of businesses and industries. According to a 2025 McKinsey survey, over **75%** of respondents say their organizations now use AI in at least one business function.<sup>1</sup>

While the healthcare industry has expressed excitement over the possibilities of AI, the importance of reliable information driving decision-making when it comes to patient care has also fueled some caution in AI adoption. This concern underscores the critical role of clinical reasoning and the need for AI solutions to be developed and verified by clinicians who understand the nuances of patient care and evidence-based practice.

Despite inherent cautiousness, a myriad of factors – including increasing care complexity for an aging population, changing patient expectations, and growing administrative burdens – are driving growing desire for a quick, concise path to the appropriate clinical intelligence to drive efficiency in provider workflows.

However, that efficiency cannot come at the cost of clinical reasoning, patient care, and outcomes grounded in evidence.

Healthcare professionals demand it all of their solutions: reliability of clinical evidence, speed and efficiency of answers delivered, and integrity of their and their patients' data. And now, for the first time when it comes to AI, they can have it. The future of healthcare AI is being built to value evidence over influence, creating tools that no longer require professionals to compromise.

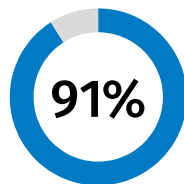


## The ‘either-or’ problem in healthcare AI

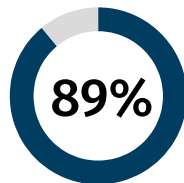
In its 2024 survey, the American Medical Association found that **66%** of physicians used AI in their practice, up significantly from 38% in the previous year. Additionally, the majority of physicians who said they see advantages in AI tools increased.<sup>2</sup>

This tracks with a 2025 Wolters Kluwer survey of physicians that also found a year-over-year increase in interest in using AI – with more than **68%** saying they are more likely to view the technology as beneficial than before. But only **40%** felt they were ready to start using it in direct patient interactions. Much higher percentages of physicians saw AI as a tool to help optimize care teams and save time searching literature and documenting data in electronic health records (EHRs).<sup>3</sup>

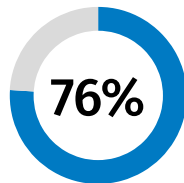
**While overall interest in AI was high, physicians reported that they would be very selective as to which AI solutions they would choose. Their criteria would include<sup>3</sup>:**



Knowing the source materials within the tool were created by medical professionals.



Vendor transparency regarding information sources.

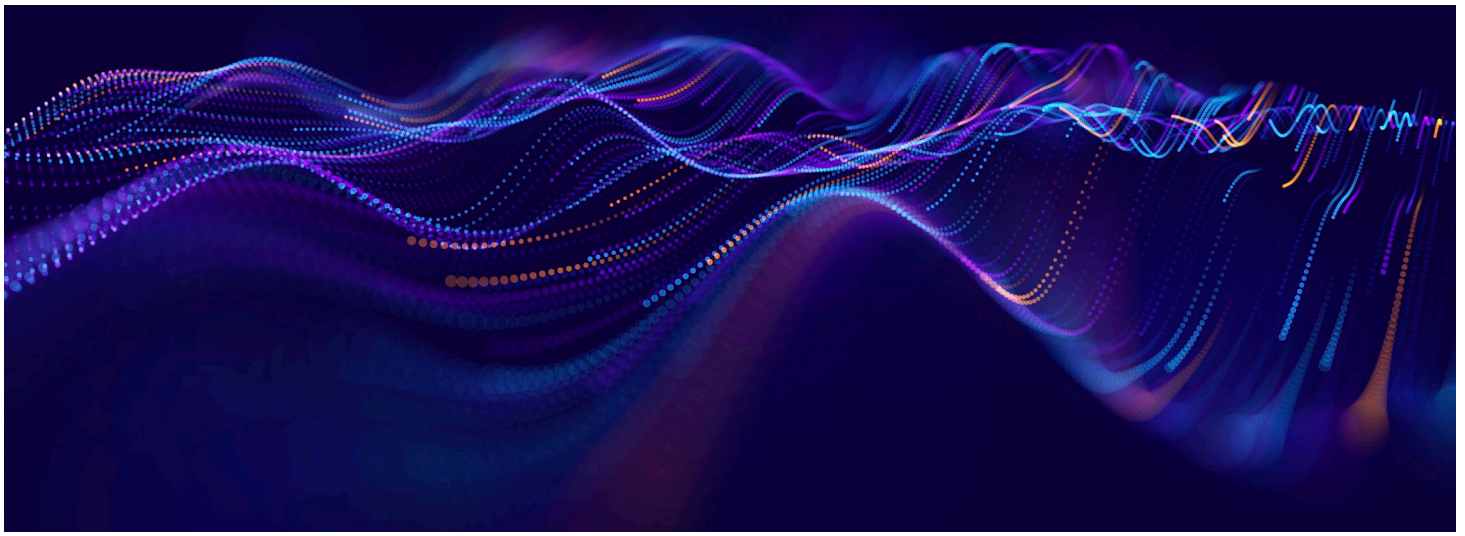


Solutions created by established, trusted vendors.

The goal in development of health AI tools should be to meet these high expectations of clinicians. This includes ensuring that clinical reasoning remains central to AI development, with tools designed to support, not replace, clinicians' decision-making processes. That's why involving clinical experts in the ideation and testing of solutions is critical. Even so, the Philips 2025 Future Health Index global survey found that, although **69%** of healthcare professionals are involved in helping to develop these technologies, only **38%** said they feel these tools are designed with their needs in mind.<sup>4</sup> This gap reveals that the healthcare technology industry is still struggling to translate clinical needs into practical workflow solutions.

Grappling with clinician expectations, transparency needs; the basics of efficiency, IT and privacy practicalities, and managing ethical issues and concerns from patients and professionals over whether the technology can be trusted, healthcare organizations are facing difficult choices as to how to develop an AI strategy that suits everyone's needs and deploy tools that alleviate everyone's concerns. This creates an “either-or” problem for healthcare leaders, making them feel like they have to choose which goals to pursue and which they can live without.





AI solutions that aren't guided by clinician needs, clinical standards, and expert verification force healthcare leaders to sacrifice one benefit to achieve another:

- ➔ **Speed vs. reliability:** AI-driven healthcare tools have been shown to enhance operational efficiencies and reduce human error. However, AI models have demonstrated a potential for bias, either in their datasets or the design of their algorithms, that can lead to lower quality care diagnostic outcomes, resource misallocation, and perpetuation of health disparities.<sup>5</sup>
- ➔ **Reliability vs. privacy:** AI advances have demonstrably impacted clinical decision-making in many fields of medicine and surgery, but the more advanced the technology becomes the larger the amount of data it requires to function. To keep patients safe, the protocol is to de-identify their data before it is shared or exposed to any third-party system. But studies have shown that some algorithms can re-identify data.<sup>6</sup> And AI solutions that include ads and potential open sourcing could leave patient information or organizational data vulnerable to leakage.
- ➔ **Trust vs. efficiency:** Even tools with strong privacy protections and expert verification of data can be deployed ineffectively within healthcare professionals' workflows. If AI-enhanced tools don't save time or reduce professional burnout and cognitive load, they aren't serving their original intended purpose.
- ➔ **Speed vs. critical thinking:** While AI-enabled tools are making many healthcare tasks – such as reading labs – easier and quicker for professionals, studies are beginning to show that doctors' analytical skills may decline if they become used to AI systems doing the work for them.<sup>7</sup> Termed “deskilling,” the reduction of daily hands-on experience may lead to a weakening of critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.<sup>8</sup>

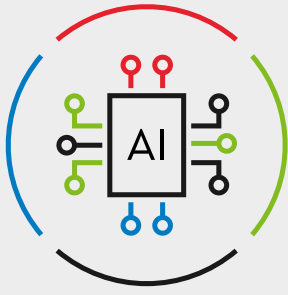
AI systems can balance trustworthiness and efficiency. Future-focused AI should deliver on the technological promises of saving time, optimizing resources, and striving to reduce the cognitive load and burden on humans, while also being mindful of energy consumption. At the same time, innovators should work constantly to mitigate bias, exhibit transparency, offer robust evidence, and demonstrate accountability. Finding this balance, rather than settling for tradeoffs, is essential.<sup>9</sup>

"It can be upwards of 15 years from something being borne out by research to what you might consider to be wide-scale adoption in healthcare. And that just feels incredibly too long in this day and age," says Wolters Kluwer Health SVP and General Manager Yaw Fellin. When it comes to AI solutions, instead of feeling the need to compromise, healthcare organizations should focus on finding “very scaled ways to accelerate evidence-based adoption or best practice.”



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*According to a recent Fierce Healthcare online survey, 76% of physician respondents said they use general-purpose AI tools – like ChatGPT – in their clinical decision-making.<sup>12</sup>*

## The hidden costs of ‘free’ AI tools

With data breaches – and their related costs – on the rise,<sup>10</sup> many health systems are increasingly focused on mitigating risks. Patients also have growing expectations for safeguards around their information, and they expect security to be a part of solutions clinicians consult to treat them.

Patients express more positivity about health AI when they believe it will help minimize clinician error, free up time for them to get in to see their doctor sooner, and result in more time within appointments. However, the more knowledgeable they are about AI, the more likely they are to express a desire for information on transparency and the safety of their data.<sup>4</sup>

Healthcare cybersecurity professionals have expressed concern about limited monitoring and informal governance of AI at their organizations. When surveyed by HIMSS, **42%** said their organizations had no formal approval process for AI technologies, and only **1%** reported developing AI policies or guardrails at their organizations.<sup>11</sup>

That lack of governance can result in clinicians taking unintended risks online. According to a recent Fierce Healthcare online survey, **76%** of physician respondents said they use general-purpose AI tools – like ChatGPT – in their clinical decision-making.<sup>12</sup> However, such tools can lack transparency into sources or may not have access to the most recent studies.

Other tools offer more specificity and training on health information, but those might come with less privacy for the user. Often, their profile and usage data may be shared with third-party partners, including the potential to share users’ engagement history with advertisers, and some tools even introduce third-party advertising at the point of care.





## Having it all: Building trust in AI for healthcare

When it comes to surfacing relevant and appropriate clinical content, Generative AI (GenAI) needs to provide more than speed and convenience. The ability to discern what is backed by evidence and what is not is no longer optional; it is essential to delivering effective, responsible, and appropriate care.

For AI to enhance clinical decision-making and alleviate the urgency clinicians feel to keep up with the accelerating complexity of medicine, without compromising on key values, sophisticated solutions should offer all – not some – of the rigorous standards demanded by healthcare leadership:



### **Proven reliability and trust in evidence:**

A solution grounded in clinical intelligence will incorporate the real-world experience of its clinician experts and peer-reviewed insight into every recommendation. In a fast-moving clinical landscape, GenAI rooted in evidence-based information creates consistency and credibility across all patient touchpoints.



### **Robust data privacy measures:**

The clinical moment is best kept between a provider, patient, and the evidence without interruption from advertisers or concern about personal search history being sold. Trusted solution partners can also facilitate integration of AI-powered tools into key workflows, often without accessing, storing, or sharing sensitive patient data.



**Designed with a clinician's mindset:** A GenAI solution should be designed with the inherent understanding that it enhances – but does not replace – professional autonomy by supporting informed care decision. A risk-aware tool helps clinicians avoid common missteps by clearly surfacing relevant considerations and highlighting key assumptions. It will also provide context by recognizing clinical nuances and tailoring content to a specific clinical scenario.



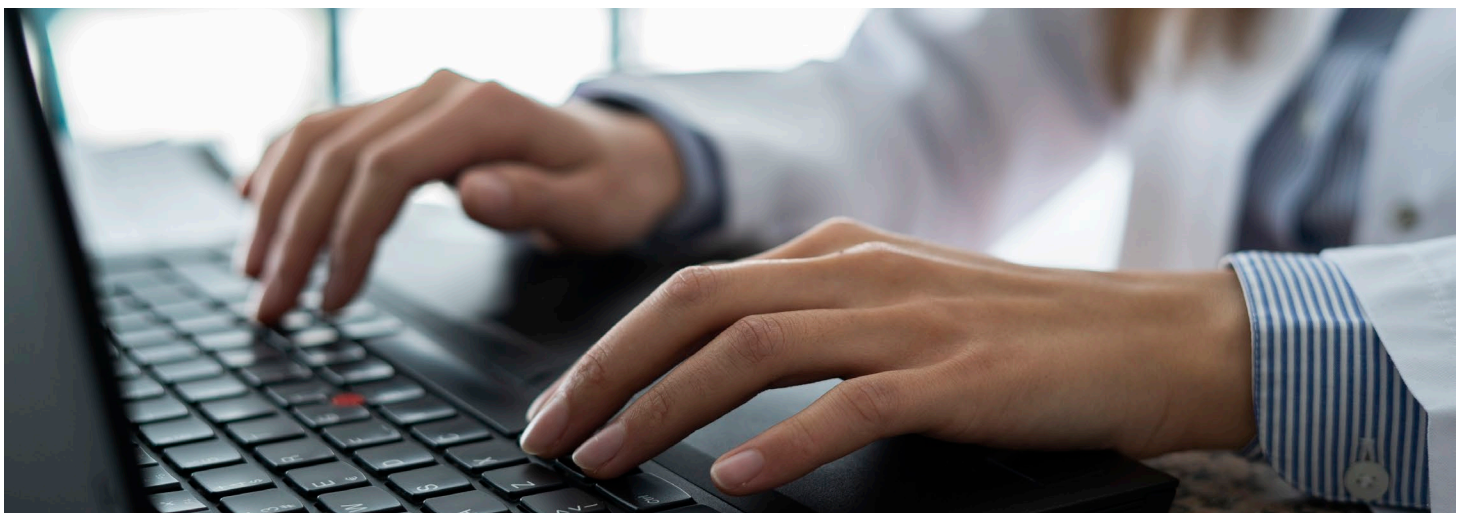
**Fast answers that support clinical reasoning:** It's not just about returning a quick answer to a query, it's about reducing the time and cognitive load for the provider who is searching. AI-enabled tools that offer verbatim content results highlighted in the source topic help users quickly navigate to the exact location where the guidance was sourced. By shifting from simply serving up search results to delivering clinical intelligence and tools to support clinical reasoning, GenAI can help clinicians reduce variability and boost efficiency.

“GenAI has the potential to be a powerful tool for supporting sustainability in healthcare organizations right now, as well as preparing them for a more efficient future,” says Greg Samios, CEO of Wolters Kluwer Health. “The challenge is developing a strategy that can both optimize the current state in a highly volatile environment and simultaneously equip organizations with the digital capabilities they need to remain competitive over the next several years. Right now, organizations are at risk of falling behind unless they take a more cohesive approach to making GenAI standardized, scalable, and impactful.”



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## Having it all: Building trust in AI for healthcare

As healthcare professionals continue to embrace GenAI, “I anticipate we’ll see an increase in innovation and integrations to bring evidence-based recommendations directly into the clinical workflow, reducing the number of clicks needed to improve documentation, provide patient education, and receive clinical decision support,” says Wolters Kluwer’s Fellin. “Just a few seconds can make all the difference in healthcare, and with each click saved, we can significantly reduce the cognitive burden on our healthcare professionals and foster more meaningful interactions with patients.”

To achieve those meaningful interactions and observe significant results in efficiency and reduction of cognitive burden, clinicians will need to prioritize AI-driven tools that align with their personal values and professional priorities, not what is easiest or most universally accessible. This prioritization should focus on tools developed in collaboration with clinical experts, keeping clinical reasoning intact, and making the solutions practical and trustworthy within care workflow.

Demanding solutions that combine speed-to-answer with trusted evidence, reliability, transparency, and privacy protections will help clinicians and healthcare professionals meet their practical goals for an AI-enhanced tool while still feeling protected, understanding appropriate use, and feeling comfortable using GenAI in direct patient-care scenarios.

It does not have to be an “either-or.”



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